

leased and easily developable acres of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, only to have their profits plunge while trying to reduce gas prices?

Last week, Democrats in Congress supported legislation to increase domestic oil production by requiring oil companies to drill on leases they control or lose those leases to companies that would drill.

The Republicans once again voted no. Republicans won't require oil companies to drill, but they have no problem handing them more leases to hoard while gas pump prices and oil company profits soar.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. TAUSCHER). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

APPROVING RENEWAL OF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS CONTAINED IN THE BURMESE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2003

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 93) approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 93

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. RENEWAL OF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS UNDER THE BURMESE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ACT OF 2003.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Congress approves the renewal of the import restrictions contained in section 3(a)(1) of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—This joint resolution shall be deemed to be a “renewal resolution” for purposes of section 9 of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003.

SEC. 2. CERTAIN COBRA FEES.

Section 13031(j)(3)(B)(i) of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (19 U.S.C. 58c(j)(3)(B)(i)) is amended by striking “September 30, 2017” and inserting “October 7, 2017”.

SEC. 3. TIME FOR PAYMENT OF CORPORATE ESTI- MATED TAXES.

The percentage under subparagraph (C) of section 401(l) of the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005 in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act is increased by 0.25 percentage points.

SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This joint resolution and the amendments made by this joint resolution shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this joint resolution or July 26, 2008, whichever occurs first.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The bill before us will renew the import ban on products of Burma. While there can be concerns about the universal effectiveness of unilateral sanctions, Burma clearly presents a unique situation. There is overwhelming evidence that Burma continues to blatantly disregard human rights and suppress democracy, and it is therefore important to continue the import ban for another year.

Under the military regime that rules Burma today, Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi remains under house arrest, which the military regime extended yet again in May. She has been detained for 12 of the last 18 years without being charged or tried. The government is also detaining almost 2,000 other civic activists indefinitely and without charge. The detention of Aung San Suu Kyi and these other activists would be reason enough to renew the sanctions. Unfortunately, there are many more examples of human rights abuses in Burma.

Government security forces killed and injured hundreds of demonstrators during their suppression of pro-democracy protests in September. These forces have also committed other extrajudicial killings, as well as disappearances, rape, and torture in the past year.

Regime-supported organizations and militias have harassed, abused and detained human rights and pro-democracy activists. The government regularly tramples on the Burmese people's privacy and their freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, religion and movement.

Violence and discrimination against women and ethnic minorities; recruitment of child soldiers; and trafficking in persons, especially women and girls, persist. Workers' rights remain restricted and forced labor, including that of children, continues to be a problem.

The military regime's handling of tropical cyclone Nargis this past spring also underscores the poor human rights situation in Burma. The regime did little to warn citizens about the calamitous cyclone. Almost 150,000 people are dead or missing. Nor did the regime provide adequate assistance to hundreds of thousands who survived the cyclone.

While dozens of nations, including our Nation, responded immediately to the cyclone and attempted to provide humanitarian assistance, the government initially denied them permission to enter the country. It continues to severely limit their ability to provide assistance.

As a result, the Burmese people unnecessarily suffer. In light of Burma's continuing dismal record and the lack of any concrete steps to provide basic human rights to its citizens or to implement basic democratic reforms, I urge my colleagues to extend the ban on the import of Burmese products for another year.

I also hope the European Union, ASEAN and other nations around the world will continue to work with the U.S. to increase pressure on the Burmese regime. This week's ASEAN meetings in Singapore offer the opportunity to do so.

I would also like to submit the following letters for the RECORD:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, July 9, 2008.

Hon. HOWARD BERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing regarding H. J. Res. 93, which renews the import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 (P. L. No. 108-61). This legislation was introduced on June 5, 2008.

As you know, the Committee on Ways & Means has jurisdiction over import matters, such as the import ban imposed by the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act. Accordingly, certain provisions of H. J. Res. 93 fall under the Committee's jurisdiction.

The import ban imposed by this Act must be renewed annually by Congress to remain in effect. Last year, the Committee allowed the renewal legislation to proceed to the floor without a Committee markup. To again expedite this legislation for floor consideration, the Committee will forgo action on this bill and will not oppose its consideration on the suspension calendar. This is done with the understanding that it does not in any way prejudice the Committee or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this, or similar legislation, in the future.

I would appreciate your response to this letter, confirming our understanding with respect to H.J. Res. 93, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

CHARLES B. RANGEL,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, July 9, 2008.

Hon. CHARLES B. RANGEL,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding H. J. Res. 93, approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003.

I appreciate your willingness to waive consideration of this legislation in the interest of expediting its consideration. I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means. I agree that the inaction of